



## Newsletter for English Teachers

September 2006

### In this Issue:

Back to School – U.S. Elementary and Secondary Schools \* EducationUSA \* Space \*  
International Literacy Day \* Five Years After 9/11 \* Upcoming Programs & WebChats

### Back to School – U.S. Elementary and Secondary Schools

For most elementary and secondary school students, the Labor Day weekend heralds the end of summer vacation. After one last long weekend, often spent away from home at a beach or a holiday resort, the school year starts again. With only a few short breaks, it will last until late May or early June.

The United States does not have a national school system, and education is primarily a State and local responsibility. States, communities, public and private organizations establish schools and colleges, develop curricula, and determine requirements for enrollment and graduation. Each of the states has its own laws regulating education

(<http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d05/lt2.asp#14>). About 90% of the estimated \$909 billion being spent nationwide on education at all levels for school year 2004-2005 comes from State, local, and private sources.

Traditionally, elementary school includes kindergarten through the eighth grade. In some places, however, elementary school ends after the sixth grade, and students attend middle school, or junior high school, from grades seven through nine. Similarly, secondary school, or high school, traditionally comprises grades nine through twelve, but in some places begins at the tenth grade.

The government provides guidance and funding for federal educational programs through the Department of Education (<http://www.ed.gov>). Not until this 1979 was the "Office of Education" elevated to a "Department", i.e. a separate, cabinet-level agency. This agency of the federal government establishes policy for, administers, and coordinates most federal assistance to education. It assists the president in executing his education policies for the nation and in implementing laws enacted by Congress.

#### Read more:

★ **About the USA > Society > Education**

<http://usa.usembassy.de/society-education.htm>

★ **About the USA > Holidays > Labor Day**

<http://usa.usembassy.de/holidays-labor.htm>

★ **Digest of Education Statistics.** National Center for Education Statistics, August 2006.

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006030>

★ **Facts for Features: Back to School 2006-2007.**

U.S. Census Bureau.

<http://www.census.gov/Press->

[Release/www/releases/archives/facts\\_for\\_features\\_special\\_editions/007108.html](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/007108.html)



Taking the school bus

([www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/November05/Features/Education.htm](http://www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/November05/Features/Education.htm))

#### Fast Facts

**54%** 3- and 4-year-olds are enrolled in school

**68%** of children enrolled in kindergarten attend all day

**55 million** students are enrolled in the nation's elementary and high schools

**22%** of elementary and high school students have at least one foreign-born parent

**6.8 million** teachers work in the United States, of which 2.6 million teach at the elementary and middle school level

**\$46,800** is the national average annual salary of public elementary and secondary school teachers

**14.2 million** computers are available for classroom use in the nation's 114,700 elementary and secondary schools (one computer for every four students)

**1.1 million** students are homeschooled (2% of all students ages 5 to 17)

- ★ **Current Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 2003-04.**  
National Center for Education Statistics, August 2006.  
<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006352>
- ★ **Facts for Features: Labor Day 2006.** U.S. Census Bureau  
[http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts\\_for\\_features\\_special\\_editions/007125.html](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/007125.html)
- ★ **Labor Day: How it Came About; What it Means** (International Information Programs)  
[http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life\\_and\\_culture/holidays/labor\\_day.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/holidays/labor_day.html)
- ★ **Homeschooling in the United States** (National Center for Education Statistics)  
<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2006/2006042.pdf>

## EducationUSA Germany: U.S. Government Advising Services on Educational and Cultural Exchange

<http://www.usembassy.de/germany/exchanges/>



In conjunction with the U.S. Department of State's Education USA program, the Information Resource Centers of the U.S. Diplomatic Mission to Germany's Public Affairs section offer telephone and web-based reference and referral services for information on exchange opportunities, including "High School Year Abroad".

**Telephone InfoLine:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 14:00-17:00, Tel: 030 - 31 80 08 99

**Email:** [austausch@state.gov](mailto:austausch@state.gov)

**Webchat:** Second Monday of every month: 15:00-16:00 pm. (<http://www.us-botschaft.de/germany-ger/austausch/webchat.html>)

In addition, the Embassy supports a network of Education USA advising centers in Germany. A list of advising center is available at [http://www.usembassy.de/germany/exchanges/advising\\_centers.html](http://www.usembassy.de/germany/exchanges/advising_centers.html)

## Space

Thomas Reiter from Frankfurt/Main is Germany's first astronaut to visit the International Space Station (ISS). Reiter, who will spend 175 days on the ISS, is also the first long-duration ISS crewmember who is neither a U.S. or Russian astronaut.

- ★ **About the USA > Science & Technology > Space**  
<http://usa.usembassy.de/technology-space.htm>
- ★ **NASA - National Aeronautics and Space Administration**  
<http://www.nasa.gov/home/index.html>
- ★ **NASA For Educators**  
<http://www.nasa.gov/audience/foreducators/9-12/features/index.html>
- ★ **International Space Station – Expedition 13**  
[http://www.nasa.gov/mission\\_pages/station/expeditions/expedition13/index.html](http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/station/expeditions/expedition13/index.html)
- ★ **Smithsonian – National Air and Space Museum, Washington D.C. – Education Materials**  
[http://www.nasm.si.edu/education/resources\\_classroom.cfm](http://www.nasm.si.edu/education/resources_classroom.cfm)
- ★ **America's Space Program: Exploring a New Frontier**  
(Teaching with Historic Places Lesson Plan)  
<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/101space/101space.htm>

### ★ Earthkam

<http://www.earthkam.ucsd.edu/>

"ISS EarthKAM is a NASA sponsored program that provides stunning, high quality photographs of our planet taken from the Space Shuttle and International Space Station. Includes a searchable image database, and information for educators and students.

### ★ Encyclopedia Astronautica

<http://www.astronautix.com/>

This resource details the history of space exploration with an emphasis on human missions to space. Brief astronaut biographies are given with exhaustive links to various spacecraft, boosters, rocket engines, fuels, space programs, and launch sites.

### ★ Science Fiction and Fantasy Research Database (Texas A&M University)

<http://lib-edit.tamu.edu/cushing/sffrd/>

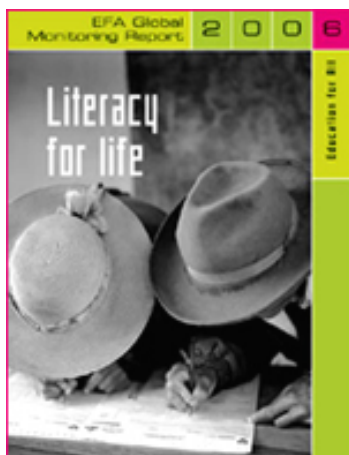
"The Science Fiction and Fantasy Research Database is an on-line, searchable compilation and extension of Science Fiction and Fantasy Reference Index 1878-1985, Science Fiction and Fantasy Reference Index 1985-1991, and Science Fiction and Fantasy Reference Index 1992-1995, including material located since



[http://www.nasa.gov/mission\\_pages/station/expeditions/expedition13/index.html](http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/station/expeditions/expedition13/index.html)

From left: Astronaut Thomas Reiter, Commander Pavel Vinogradov and Flight Engineer and NASA Science Officer Jeffrey Williams. Photo credit: Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center

publication of the last printed volume. Most material was obtained and examined by the compiler; the remainder was verified in a reliable secondary source."



#### **Education For All: Global Monitoring Report (Unesco)**

<http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php->

[URL\\_ID=43009&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=43009&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

#### **History**

**1966** Establishment of International Literacy Day upon recommendation of the 1965 World Conference of Ministers.

**1967** First UNESCO International Literacy Day celebration.

**1975** International Reading Association begins association with UNESCO.

**1979** First International Reading Association Literacy Award presented.

**1980** Creation of the Noma Prize

**1985** Fourth International Conference on Adult Education.

**1989** Establishment of the King Sejong Award

**1990** "International Literacy Year" proclaimed by the United Nations.

**1997** 5th International Conference on Adult Education, Hamburg Germany.

**1998** Malcolm Adiseshiah International Literacy Prize

**2000** "Literacy in the Information Age" panel discussion held at the United States Library of Congress in coordination with the International Literacy Day commemoration.

**2001** National Adult Literacy Survey released, the survey reported new information about adult illiteracy in America.

**2002** UNESCO's International Literacy Day celebrated for the 38th time with the theme "Literacy as Freedom," which linked literacy to development.

**2003-2015** United Nations Literacy Decade - an initiative to energize work towards reaching the goal of increasing literacy levels by 50% by the year 2015.

[http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/literacy\\_day/id\\_history.html](http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/literacy_day/id_history.html)

#### **September 8: International Literacy Day**

International Literacy Day, celebrated since 1966 annually on September 8, calls attention to the global effort to promote literacy and education as a central United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) mission. In 2003, the UN launched the United Nations Literacy Decade - an initiative intended to energize work towards reaching the goal of increasing literacy levels by 50% by the year 2015.

<http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/index.shtml>

On September 18, 2006, the first lady, Mrs Laura Bush, co-sponsors a conference on global literacy in New York immediately prior to the opening of the new session of the United Nations General Assembly. Laura Bush announced the conference on April 24, during a UNESCO luncheon marking Education for All Week. The Education for All movement originated in 1990 when participants at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, pledged to support primary education for all children and to reduce adult illiteracy.

<http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/Archive/2006/Apr/25-37813.html>

#### **The Big Read (National Endowment for the Arts)**

<http://www.neabigread.org/>

"The Big Read is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts, in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and in cooperation with Arts Midwest. It is designed to revitalize the role of literature in American popular culture and bring the transformative power of literature into the lives of its citizens. The Big Read works with multiple partners across the country to encourage citizens to read for pleasure and enlightenment." Mrs. Laura Bush is the honorary chair of the Big Read (<http://www.nea.gov/news/news06/BRloc.html>)

#### **Litcam: Frankfurt Book Fair launches education drive**

<http://www.litcam.de/litcam/de/index.php>

Frankfurt Book Fair's new key focus "Education for the Future" sets out to draw attention to the growing importance of education in the age of digitisation and globalization. The programme looks at: literacy campaigns, learning in schools and careers training for the industry. The closing event on October 8 features the topic of "Functional illiteracy despite compulsory school attendance" with a panel discussion and a reading by well-known actors and authors of texts by people who have been illiterate. Illiteracy will also be discussed during the first Frankfurt Teachers' Congress on October 7<sup>th</sup> at the Congress Center. Topics covered at this event, specifically for teachers, are the encouragement of reading, provision of literature and computer learning.

#### **"One Book" Reading Promotion Projects**

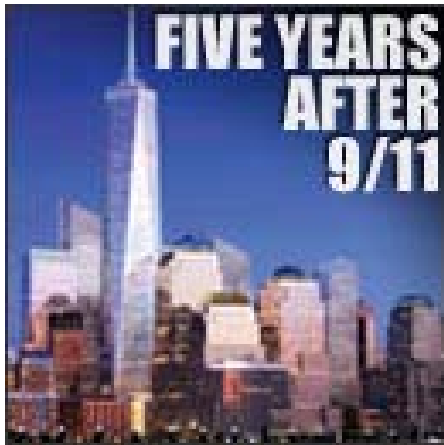
<http://www.loc.gov/loc/cfbook/one-book.html>

In 1998, the Washington Center for the Book initiated the first Community-wide reading project with 'If All of Seattle Read the Same Book'. This web resource explains the project and lists city and statewide projects across the U.S.A. From The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress.

#### **InfoAlert - For More on Trends and Current Events in the United States**

[infoalert.usembassy.de](http://infoalert.usembassy.de)

InfoAlert highlights recent articles and reports from leading U.S. journals and provides informed commentary on international and domestic issues.



<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itps/0806/ijpe/ijpe0806.htm>

#### 9/11 Chronology

8:46 AM Plane crashes into the north tower of the World Trade Center.  
 9:03 AM Plane crashes into the south tower of the World Trade Center.  
 9:17 AM The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) shuts down all New York City area airports.  
 9:21 AM The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) halts all flights at U.S. airports.  
 9:38 AM Plane crashes into the Pentagon. Evacuation begins immediately.  
 9:45 AM The White House evacuates.  
 10:05 AM The south tower of the World Trade Center collapses.  
 10:10 AM A portion of the Pentagon collapses.  
 10:10 AM Plane crashes in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.  
 10:22 AM The State and Justice Departments, as well as the World Bank are evacuated.  
 10:28 AM The World Trade Center's north tower collapses.  
 10:45 AM All federal office buildings in Washington, D.C. are evacuated.  
 1:44 PM Five warships and two aircraft carriers are ordered to leave the U.S. Naval Station in Norfolk, Virginia to protect the East Coast.  
 4:10 PM Building 7 of the World Trade Center collapses.

#### 9/11 Victims

Victims came from more than 90 countries around the world. The following are the number of people who died at each site:

World Trade Center (includes airline passengers)	2,823
Pentagon (not including plane victims)	125
Flight 11	92 people on board
Flight 175	64 people on board
Flight 77	64 people on board
Flight 93	44 people on board

<http://www.state.gov/coalition/cr/fs/12701.htm>

## E-Journal: Rebuilding and Resilience: Five Years After 9/11

"Five years after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States, the world continues to witness the effects of terrorism in places like London, Madrid, Bali, and Mumbai. And yet, in each of these places, and in New York and Washington, D.C., once the debris was cleared and the dead mourned, communities began the process of rebuilding their cities and their lives. Despite the best efforts of terrorists to disrupt peace, the resilience of people around the world, has demonstrated that the human spirit will always triumph over tragedy.

We open with an essay by native New Yorker and president of Hudson Institute Dr. Herbert London, who writes that in the once-destroyed area surrounding the World Trade Center, new high-rise buildings "seem to rise magically," demonstrating hope and resilience.

Although the United States continues to move forward, significant security concerns remain in this post-9/11 world. In "America Extends a Warm Welcome to Visitors," the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs describes improvements to the U.S. visa process that welcomes visitors while supporting U.S. border security to protect those living in the United States and international travelers. In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, communities throughout the United States pulled together to support one another. In a panel discussion, three leaders from various religious communities—Imam Yahya Hendi, Rabbi Kenneth Cohen, and Reverend Clark Lobenstein—discuss how reaching out to other religions and religious leaders brought their communities together since the 9/11 attacks. "New Beginnings" tells the personal stories of survivors of terrorist attacks who have turned tragedy into positive life changes. In "Common Myths About al-Qaida Terrorism," Dr. Marc Sageman, an independent terrorism expert, describes popular misconceptions about terrorists and those who support them. Finally, two photo galleries show in pictures a world united and resilient in the face of the threat of terrorism.

#### Webchat: Sept. 11 Five Years after 9/11 Foreign Policy Challenges

[http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/USINFO/Products/Webchats/london\\_12\\_sept\\_2006.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/USINFO/Products/Webchats/london_12_sept_2006.html)

Foreign policy challenges five years after the attacks of September 11, 2001 are the subject of a USINFO Webchat. Join Dr. Herbert London, a contributing author to the State Department's latest eJournal USA "Rebuilding and Resilience Five Years After 9/11" for an online discussion coinciding with the fifth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

Guest Biography: Dr. Herbert London is president of Hudson Institute in New York City. The former John M. Olin University Professor of Humanities at New York University, he founded the Gallatin School there in 1972 and was its dean until 1992. His social commentary has appeared in major newspapers and journals throughout the United States.

#### Web Resources:

##### The September 11, 2001, Documentary Project

[http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/911\\_archive/](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/911_archive/)  
**September 11: Bearing Witness to History**  
<http://americanhistory.si.edu/september11/>  
**September 11 and Beyond**  
<http://www.lli.org/pub/topic/September11>



## Upcoming Programs

[http://duesseldorf.usconsulate.gov/dusseldorf/upcoming\\_events.html](http://duesseldorf.usconsulate.gov/dusseldorf/upcoming_events.html)

### MEET THE AUTHOR

#### Frank McCourt

**Tuesday, September 12, 2006 at 20:00**

Kulturkirche Köln, Siebachstr. 85

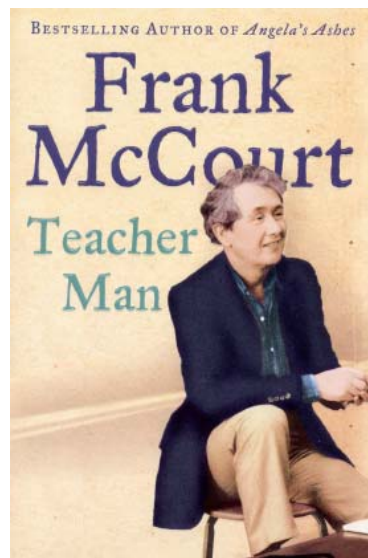
**The Author:** Frank McCourt, Pulitzer Prize winner and acclaimed memoirist, was born in New York in 1931 to Irish immigrant parents. Unable to find work in the depths of the Depression, the McCourts returned to Ireland, where they sunk even deeper into poverty. After living in Limerick, Ireland, where Frank was raised, the McCourt family came back to the United States in 1950. After attempts at several odd jobs, Frank McCourt became a high school teacher in 1958. His teaching career in New York City's public high schools, the last 17 years of which were spent at the prestigious Stuyvesant High School in Manhattan, lasted 30 years.

In 1996, his childhood memoir, *Angela's Ashes*, was published which spent more than two years on the New York Times bestseller list. The book won the 1997 Pulitzer Prize for Biography, the National Book Critics Circle (NBCC) Award in Biography/Autobiography and several other prestigious awards. In 1999, McCourt presented the sequel to *Angela's Ashes*, called *'Tis: A Memoir*. Picking up where *Angela's Ashes* left off, *'Tis* takes the reader through McCourt's amusing and heartfelt transition to New York City from Ireland.

*Teacher Man* (2006), the most recent book in this trilogy, is an account of his thirty-year teaching career with the New York City public school system.

**The Book:** In *Teacher Man*, Frank McCourt continues his memoirs on this chapter of his life and reflects on his experiences as a teacher and the relationships with his students. He describes, with wit and poignancy, his illustrious, amusing, and sometimes rather bumpy years as an English teacher in the public high schools of New York City. His thoughts and feelings of his profession lead us on a journey of his own personal development and ability to finally, after 15 years, find his own voice in the classroom.

In *Teacher Man* McCourt reflects upon the complex, dynamic relationship between teacher and students.



#### School Outreach

<http://www.usembassy.de/germany/speakers.html>

Check out our "School Outreach" program and find out how you can "book" an American student to visit your school for a day and talk to your students about everyday life in the United States.

#### Webchat Station

##### Upcoming Webchats:

Sept. 6 [America Extends Welcome to Visitors: Travel since 9/11](#)

Sept. 11 [Studying and Working in the U.S.](#)

Sept. 11 [Five Years after 9/11 Foreign Policy Challenges](#)

Sept 14 [U.S. and International Strategic Responses to Terrorism](#)

#### Impressum:

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